

HOW TO... Use handwriting recognition

If you fancy a break from writing, you can get Windows to do it for you. Jennifer Bagley explains how to get scribbling with just a mouse and WordPad

Did you know that with Windows XP you can write on your computer instead of typing on the keyboard? People tend to associate handwriting recognition with more sophisticated input devices such as graphics tablets and more expensive software such as Microsoft Office. But you don't have to be a power user with a big wallet to write directly onscreen. All you need is your mouse and WordPad, the free word-processing program that is included in the Windows Accessories menu. This isn't one of Windows' most useful features, but it can be a lot of fun to play with.

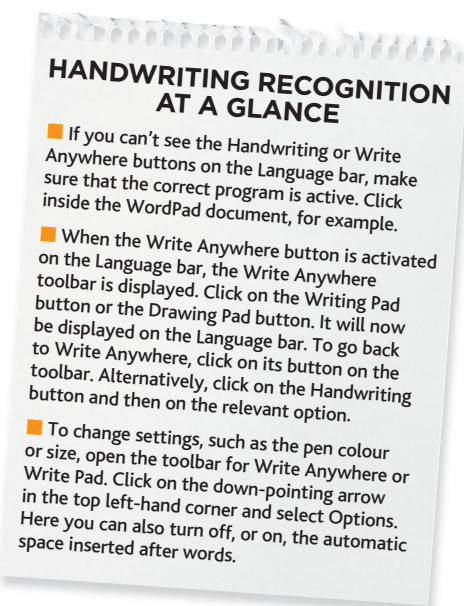
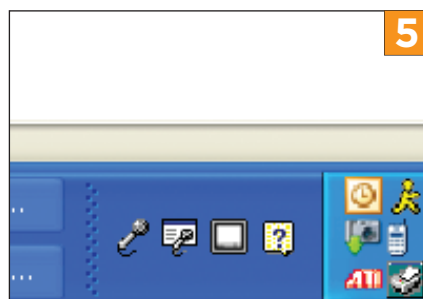
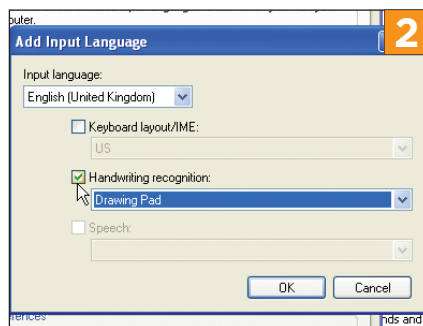
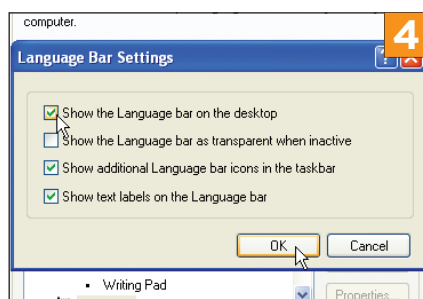
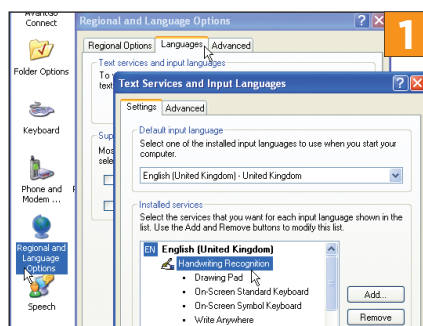
1 Handwriting recognition may have been installed when the operating system was loaded on your computer. To check, open the Control Panel and double-click on the Regional and Language Options icon. Go to the Language tab and click on Details. On the Settings tab, look for Handwriting Recognition under Installed Services.

2 If it isn't there, click the Add button. Select the language you want in the Input Language list and tick the box next to

Handwriting Recognition. Select the program you want to use in the menu. Click OK. Do the same for each program in the list that you want to add.

3 If you use Microsoft Office XP or Office 2003, open the Control Panel and double-click on the Add or Remove Programs icon. On the Change or Remove Programs tab, scroll down to Microsoft Office and click on the Change button. Select Add or Remove features and click Next. Tick the box next to Choose Advanced Customization and click Next. Click on the Plus symbol next to Office Shared Features to collapse the menu. Click on Microsoft Handwriting Component and select Run From My Computer. Finally, click on the Update button.

4 To begin writing onscreen, you need to display the Language Bar. If it isn't visible, go back to the Regional and Language Options dialog box in Control Panel. Select the Languages tab and click on the Details button. On the Settings tab, click on the Language Bar button. Make sure the box is ticked next to Show the Language bar on the desktop. Show the Language bar on the desktop.



5 Open a program, such as WordPad. By default, the Language bar will be displayed across the top of your screen. Click on the dots on the left-hand side and drag the bar to any desired position. It can also be docked on the Taskbar on the side next to the System Tray or displayed on the Quick Launch area. This is handy if you have a big monitor and are using the Taskbar at double height or higher. To dock the Language bar on the Taskbar quickly, click on the Minimize button on the top right-hand corner of the bar. If you'd like to change the way the buttons are displayed on the bar, or any of its settings, click on the down-pointing arrow beneath the Minimize button to display the Options menu.

6 To start writing anywhere on the page, click on the Handwriting icon and select Write Anywhere. The Write Anywhere toolbar will appear. Draw a letter with your mouse. Wait a second, and it should appear as the letter WordPad thinks you are trying to write. **CS**

